



DEPRESSION



Depression

Depression is an illness that affects your mind, body, thoughts and mood. About twice as many women suffer from depression than do men. Depression that exists for long periods and does not go away is referred to as “clinical depression” and is a very serious illness. It is much more than just “feeling blue” for a few hours or for a couple of days.

What are the causes of depression?

Many things can cause depression.

- It can run in families, or social factors such as the stresses of being a working or single mother, caring for elderly family members, or financial or relationship problems can trigger depression
- You may experience depression when you are going through painful and difficult events in your life
- Certain medications for illnesses such as cancer, arthritis, heart problems and high blood pressure may cause depression

Symptoms of depression

If you have some of these symptoms that last longer than two weeks, see your health care provider.

- Feeling empty, sad or anxious
- Feeling tired, having no energy
- Feeling restless and irritable most of the time
- Crying more than usual
- Feeling worthless, helpless, hopeless and guilty
- Having no interest or joy in life
- Having trouble sleeping, or waking up very early in the morning
- Having problems eating too much or too little food
- Thinking about suicide and death
- Having trouble concentrating, remembering and making decisions
- Having physical problems that do not go away when you take medicine such as headaches, stomach problems, and pains in your body



Getting Help

Most people with depression feel better once they begin treatment. The most common treatments are medication and psychotherapy (talking to a specially trained counselor or therapist). It may take a few weeks or even months, but most people will experience a positive change in mood or outlook. Here are some ways to get help for your depression:

- Talk to your health care provider about how you have been feeling. Get a physical examination to determine if medicines or illnesses might be causing you to feel depressed. Your health care provider can refer you to someone who can treat depression

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- Talk to a friend, family member, religious leader, or someone that you trust about how you are feeling. He/she can help you find someone to treat your depression
- Get more information online by visiting the Web sites below:
 - **National Institute of Mental Health**
www.nimh.nih.gov
 - **National Foundation for Depressive Illness, Inc.**
www.depression.org
 - **National Depressive and Manic Depressive Association**
www.ndmda.org
 - **The National Mental Health Association of Georgia**
www.nmhag.org

This information is a source of education and information and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment.